

Subject: Pavlo Virsky

Date: June 6, 1965

Source - H, Buenos Aires

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The meeting took place June 6, 1965, from 12:10 to 1:45 PM in room 521-2 of Hotel Continental in Buenos Aires.

Present were: Mykhaylo Vasylyk, Bohdan Halaychuk, Pavlo Virsky, and during the second half of the meeting -- a ~~30~~ 30-year-old individual, a representative of the Ministry of Culture (probably of the Ukr. SSR), who follows the ensemble around. He would not give his name, even when asked. There are at least three other persons of this type with the group. They have been spotted in a restaurant, speaking Russian.

At the outset of the meeting Vasylyk suggested to Virsky that they meet for a dinner. V. explained that he would be glad to come, but that day he had a dinner date at the Soviet Embassy. They set a tentative date for June 9, to meet for dinner, and Virsky agreed, but he could not keep the date, because of other business.

The conversation went very smoothly and in a friendly tone. Virsky proved an able conversationist.

Virsky thanked Halaychuk for the translations of reviews from the local press, which H had sent V a few days earlier. He said the translations were very interesting with some new material for him, because the other translations he had received were not as complete. In one of the reviews superiority of Ukrainian ballet over the two Russian was emphasized. Halaychuk mentioned this, and V smiled slyly and answered "well, I can't help that."

V also asked whether he could get the History of Ukrainian Culture, now being published in Canada. Vasylyk ^{not} had a copy, ^{but} gave ~~him~~ ^{a copy} Virsky History of Ukr. Liter. by Chyzhevsky.

He was bitter about the stand taken towards the ensemble by the Ukr. Central Representation in Argentina. (he also spoke about it to other Ukrainians): "What we are doing is not only for ourselves, but for you also," he said.

Vasylyk replied that Virsky's ensemble is doing much for Ukrainian propaganda. When one tells an average Argentine that one is Ukrainian, said Vasylyk, the Argentine immediately asks "are you one of the dancers?" H. said that an ensemble of Virsky's calibre surpasses anything the emigres are able to put on in the field of arts. Vasylyk mentioned the emigre Bandurist ensemble, and Virsky admitted that it was a big achievement, and that it was unfortunate that the emigres could not maintain it.

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About this time the cultural attache entered the room. H asked whether he was a cultural attache from the local embassy. The latter replied that he merely travels with the ensemble to untangle any snags.

H.: "Then you are acting as a sort of travelling cultural attache? It's too bad there are no permanent attaches, and embassies (of the UkrSSR)."

The man replied that there will be changes in that state of affairs.

Later the "attache" pulled out Symonenko's Zemne tyazhinnya, saying: "I brought this book, because I know that the emigres respect Symonenko.

Vasylyk said he read Symonenko in one of the magazines.

"In SUCHASNIST?" asked the man, and added, "we know of that journal."

Halaychuk asked the man for his autograph on the book, but he gave the book to Virsky instead to sign. H still insisted, and the man signed the book, but illegibly.

H then asked him whether he is also a dancer, and the answer was, No.

H asked whether there were more persons like him, who travel with the dancers but who do not dance. The man replied, "Yes," but this answer confused him and he turned red.

H also brought out a copy of Radyans'ke Pravo saying he has difficulties getting such periodicals in Argentina. The man answered that that was not his department:

When asked about the rest of the tour, Virsky replied that they plan to travel to Chile, Peru, Equador, Colombia, Panama and Mexico. As for Venezuela, V. replied: "No, because such things are going on there -- shooting and all, our girls are afraid to go there." He added that they still did not have visas for Peru and Equador, and that the Argentine visa came a few days before the announced performances. One can hardly work under such conditions, he commented.

The conversation again turned to the Ukr. Central Rep. declaration. Halaychuk pointed out that this view is not representative of all Ukrainians. That a number of them sought out the dancers. Virsky and the kulturtreger agreed that this was so, but the latter added that such views (as that of the Representation) were unnecessary. Several times the kulturtreger expressed himself rather poorly. There was a marked contrast between him and Virsky in the conducting of conversation.

The conversation was interrupted by some Chilean folkdancer. H and Vasylyk acted as interpreters.

Twice the two men wanted to leave, but Virsky asked them to stay. Finally, when they were ready to leave, Virsky commented sadly that it was unfortunate that the Chilean took up so much time. They could have talked longer. They agreed to meet Wednesday June 9.

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It was impossible to contact Virsky by telephone all day June 9. Finally, Halaychuk did get through on June 8 in the evening. Virsky excused himself, saying he was busy going after the visas. He suggested that he call him the next day, to get together for a dinner. But the next day, June 9, he was ~~also~~ busy too, and said he was sorry he would not be able to get the books the two men promised him.

(The books were left with the desk clerk, and Virsky did get them).

During the final telephone conversation Vasylyk said he was glad to have an opportunity to speak to Virsky and also that his ensemble has more Ukrainian spirit, than could be hoped for, from an emigre point of view. Virsky replied that the ensemble is steeped in Ukrainian spirit. Vasylyk also commented on one of the numbers which was taken off the program after two or three performances. The number: "Why the willow weeps". It deals with a Cossack who leaves for a battle, bids farewell to his wife, and does not return. His fellows bring back his sabre to the fallen Cossack's wife, and his son hugs the sabre to his chest. This was a very moving number, which brought tears to the eyes of the female audiences. Said Virsky: "I don't know why, but they suggested that I take this number off because it brings forth various interpretations, yet it's merely a dramatization of Shevchenko's poem."

On SUCHASNIST

Virsky was glad to see Koshelivets' article on the dancers. Said K. is a nice person, whom he remembers with pleasure; that K had to travel a long way to see the ensemble in Paris.

Halaychuk then gave V a copy of SUCH. with his article, "UkSSR as an obstacle in the drawing together of nations." He noticed that M. has other books in the briefcase, and said: "What are you hiding there, why do you pull things out one by one?" Halaychuk then pulled out everything he had. Most of the articles were strictly on legal themes, except The Enslaved Nation, which was semi-political. Virsky said that he is interested in everything, and took all the books, and quickly put them in his drawer.

Books given to Virsky

History of Ukrainian Literature by Chyzhevsky (Tschizevskij)

Ne dlya ditoy by Sherech

Articles by Halaychuk and two copies of Suchasnist

The Enslaved Nation by Halaychuk

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